

**JUSTICE JOHN D. MINTON, JR.'S REMARKS
GRAYSON COUNTY JUDICIAL CENTER GROUNDBREAKING
LEITCHFIELD, KENTUCKY
AUGUST 31, 2007**

Senator Gibson and Rep. Embry, Judge Logsdon and members of the Fiscal Court, fellow members of the Judiciary, members of the Project Development Board, Grayson County officials, members of the bar, and my friends in Grayson County.

It is my great honor to mark this important occasion with you today—the occasion of the groundbreaking for the Grayson County Judicial Building.

And I bring you greetings from Chief Justice Joseph Lambert and my fellow Justices on the Supreme Court of Kentucky. On behalf of the Kentucky Court of Justice, I congratulate you on this very significant event in the life of this community and the Commonwealth.

There are a number of people whose efforts have made this event possible; but I want, especially, to acknowledge your legislative delegation, Sen. Carroll Gibson, himself the former circuit clerk here, and Rep. C. B. Embry, from neighboring Edmonson County, for their efforts to win legislative authorization for the Grayson County project in 2005 and for approval of the Judicial Branch Budget Bill in 2006 that allowed funding for the planning and construction of this much-needed project here in Grayson County to proceed. Judge Logsdon, you have set out the shovels and invited us to begin digging the footers; I am sure that your legislative delegation represented here today would be willing to do that to move this project along.

I have always found the welcome warm and genuine here in Leitchfield. I started coming to the Grayson Circuit Court thirty years ago. Judge Kenneth Goff was a year into his first term on the circuit bench, having replaced Judge Murray Beard on the 46th Judicial Circuit.

So very early in my career I learned that a warm reception—especially for out-of-town lawyers—could take a nasty turn and heat up rather quickly if the lawyer showed up late for court.

I made it a point never to be late to court in Leitchfield. That is why I got here a little early today.

Judge Goff became our Chief Judge in the Green River Region; and because of the frequent conflicts in the Warren Circuit Court docket, Judge Goff appointed himself to preside over a number of cases in Bowling Green. So we saw the judge in Bowling Green with some regularity, and we appreciated his service.

Since his retirement, Kenneth Goff has continued to serve this community faithfully in many ways. In 2006, as Chairman of the Memorial Day festivities, he invited me to come as the speaker. I found this event on the square in Leitchfield to be a truly moving display of the deep patriotic spirit and true sense of community that exists here in Grayson County.

This is not the first time in Grayson County's 197-year history that a new courthouse has been needed. From my research, I found that this county has rebuilt three courthouses following a fire: on Christmas Eve 1864, the Grayson County Courthouse was burned by Confederate Raiders; its replacement burned some thirty years later on June 16, 1896; and that replacement burned about thirty years after that on April 3, 1936.

Our new facility will have sprinklers throughout.

In the early 1990s, under the direction of Chief Justice Lambert, our Court of Justice undertook a small program to improve some judicial buildings across the Commonwealth. The program made general improvements to the then-existing buildings. We constructed building additions and several small freestanding courthouse facilities.

But these efforts produced some rather surprising results: we found deterioration of most of Kentucky's courthouses, which suffered from inadequate space; safety and security issues; and outdated technology, mechanical, and electrical systems.

Realizing the need for extensive renovation system-wide, the Court of Justice established a comprehensive system for facility assessment and a plan to provide practical, efficient, and cost-effective judicial buildings where they were most needed for Kentucky's citizens.

In only seven years, our Facilities Management System, under Garlan VanHook's leadership, has exceeded all expectations in its ability to provide practical, efficient, and cost-effective judicial buildings for Kentucky citizens.

Under this new system, the General Assembly has authorized twenty new facilities and three facility additions. The earlier 1998 appropriation, which followed the new policy during construction, included fifteen projects. All of those projects have been completed and are in use by the Court of Justice. The estimated cost for the 2,000 authorized projects was \$200 million; and the final cost was \$206 million.

The Court of Justice is currently working on seventeen projects authorized by the 2005 General Assembly and eighteen projects authorized by the 2006 General Assembly. Eight of those projects are now under construction, with

fifteen under design, and the remainder in various stages of pre-design and Project Development Board planning.

These projects represent an investment of \$482.5 million (\$217.9 million in 2005 and \$264.6 million in 2006) in much-needed judicial facilities in Kentucky.

Grayson County now joins other communities across the Commonwealth by constructing a judicial center that is worthy of the good people of this community and fully symbolizes their faith in the pursuit of justice as one of the highest ideals of the American Republic.

British statesman, writer, and prime minister, Sir Winston Churchill is credited with having observed about the history of civilization, "We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us."

This new judicial center has been budgeted at \$12 million for 40,000 square feet and is expected to be completed in late 2009.

It has been designed to increase the efficiency in the delivery of service to the citizens of this community and the rest of the court system. It will be equipped with a modern infrastructure to support data, computer, video, and networking technologies. It will also provide the highest level of court security to promote the safety of the public and court employees.

Today, we break new ground in Leitchfield with the hope that this magnificent judicial facility will reaffirm this community's resolute commitment to the pursuit of justice and will serve as a symbol to a sometimes hostile world that our vision is for a community that conforms to the rule of law.